(f) whether any safeguards have been in place to protect the interests of the farmers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Framework Agreement for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and ASEAN was signed in October, 2003. Negotiations for CECA are on-going. List of tariff lines for liberalization are yet to be finalized.

(b) India initially offered a tentative negative list of 1414 tariff lines which was subsequently revised to 854 tariff lines.

(c) The reduction in the negative list has been made in consultation with various Ministries and other stake-holders. The list of products excluded from the revised negative list includes about 70 agricultural tariff lines.

(d) The products which have been excluded from the revised negative list do not include products which are mostly produced in the State of Kerala.

(e) The exclusion of products from the negative list has been made in consultation with various Ministries and other stake-holders and the import of these products is not likely to adversely affect the indigenous farmers.

(f) Yes, Sir.

Ban on export of iron-ore

†*156. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that steel producers in the country have demanded a ban on export of iron-ore;

(b) if so, whether Government have turned down this demand for the time-being; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefore and whether it is also a fact that higher amounts can be earned in the country by exports, by enhancing the cost of iron-ore?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Steel producers in the country like TISCO, Essar Steel and the Indian Steel Alliance have opposed export of iron-ore.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) In view of the reserves position and the need to sustain mining activities, a judicious use of iron ore for domestic purpose and export is a rational approach. Realisation from export depends on international market trend of demand and supply at a given time.

NREGA in North-Eastern States

*157. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of employment generated upto 15th July, 2006, by application of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in different districts, State-wise;

(b) the number of districts where NREGA has been in force;

(c) the number of new districts to be included in the programme during the current financial year; and

(d) whether all the districts of the North-Eastern States would be considered for inclusion in the NREGA programme considering the serious backwardness of this region?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANASH PRASAD SINGH): (a) A State-wise status report giving the number of persons provided employment is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) NREGA has been implemented in 200 identified districts in the country.

(c) and (d) As provided in Section 1(3) of the NREG Act, the Act shall be applicable in the whole country within a period of five years from the date of enactment of the Act. 200 districts have been identified by the Planning Commission for the implementation of the Act in its first phase. Extension of programme to additional districts will be considered during the course of financial year.

Statement

Progress of implementation of National Rural Exployment Guarantee Act

(Rs. in lakhs)

Sl. No.	State	Districts	Job cards issued	Employment demanded	Employment provided
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Andhra Pradesh	13	4106477	721868	705822
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1	17480		